

*Jesus, Inc.: The Visionary Path: An Entrepreneur's Guide to True Success* by Laurie Beth Jones. Reviewed by Joe Bustillos EDET 773 Tech Management – Pepperdine University – Summer 2005

My mother is always commenting that my father isn't much of a businessman, noting that he probably could have done better if he'd been more patient when he sold some property in the desert. If she thinks he's not much of a businessman it's a good thing that she doesn't have access to her son's personal financial history. Impatient five-year-olds who shove a fist full of coins in your face when they want to buy something have better business sense than yours truly. Thus, I was a little concerned when I couldn't locate a copy of Jones' *Jesus, CEO* book and found myself bringing home her follow up book *Jesus, Inc.* It was probably the part about this being a guide to success for Entrepreneurs that made me feel like a vegetarian at a wienie roast.

I guess my anxiety about books on business has to do with a fear that they are either going to be about things beyond my non-business language skills or that they'll rambling on about things that I couldn't care less about. Jones does a wonderful job not writing over my head or spending time on things that only an accountant could love. The chapters are short and too the point, filled with personal illustrations from her encounters and experiences. It's easy to assume that someone unfamiliar with Christianity or not of the Christian Faith would probably not be interested in this book. And given how much she weaves parts of the Bible, especially from the life of Jesus, with stories of the difficulties and success of those around her, one has to wonder how meaningful her philosophy would be to someone who doesn't share in her religious/cultural heritage.

For me, as someone with a Bachelor's Degree in Biblical Studies, her spirit rings true, even though she does make a few mistakes with some particulars (for example, when discussing business timing she says one would think that Jesus had perfect timing because he was born at 0 AD and died at 33 AD.<sup>1</sup> Alas, the BC/AD calendar wasn't created until several hundred years after Jesus lived and the scholar who created it got the dates wrong making most modern scholars concede that Jesus was born around 5 to 3 BC. Oops). Thus, even though every chapter begins with a passage from the Bible and ends with a prayer, one would do well to remember that this book is not about correct theology but about connecting ones public business ambitions with ones private personal spirituality.

In the introduction she lists seven "gifts of business" which are meant to encourage Christians to see that their business life is meant to be connected to their commitment to their faith.<sup>2</sup> As such it is also connected to the same promises of their faith. Basically she is speaking out against the bottom line mentality that would have us believe that this part of our lives is of no consequence or value or that we can disconnect the morality of our business life from the Faith we profess on Sundays.

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<sup>1</sup> p. 12

<sup>2</sup> p. xxv

Over the course of the book she groups her comments into sections that follow the path from “launch” with all of it’s anxieties of starting a thing, to “lurch” with all of the sophomore setbacks and crises that follow surviving a launch, to learning the “lessons” from those who have gone before you, to finding sustaining completeness and “love” at having begun this journey.

Even given my genetic anti-entrepreneurial spirit I found myself struck with the truth of her observations. I felt like turning in my anti-entrepreneurial membership card when I read: “Spiritreneurs are highly attuned to two things. The first is the voice within that says, ‘I can do this better than I am doing it,’ and the second is the voice that says, ‘I can do this better than they are doing it.’ The frustration of spiritreneurs is not a lack of opportunity, it is that there is not enough time---not enough people---to do what needs to be done.”<sup>3</sup>

I’m sure that my mom is wise enough to know that her son would be happy to have some of his father’s “bad” business sense. Having read Jones’ *Jesus, Inc.* I know that it’s not the tangible numbers that are important but success comes from connecting this part of my life to personal faith that I’ve come to love.

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<sup>3</sup> p. 44